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THE DICTIONARY UNREAL

by

Kathleen Farragher

B.A. Beloit College, 2003

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

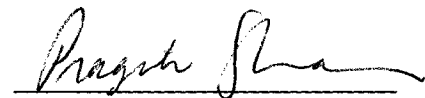
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Approved By



Chairperson



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Delusion and Contentment

Alien

I am lost of the essential nature, a refugee in movement,
And lacking the familiar have become used to Wonderbread.

I am a far distant green, a pale form. I love golden-eyed and pupil-less.
Translucent with excitement, my body long and graceful, I am a savior.

You'll find the mind is my breakfast, though I do prefer the packaged kind,
half-rotten and full in saccharine flavor.

Given that Imagination's lust was robbed of earthly metamorphoses,
I am many longing infinite: take me as globular or god.

I the father, the builder, the meteor cell of proto-plasma life,
I will take you away to the paradise intelligent and insect.
I am human in another place.

bot. I am a colonial plant. I am American Bamboo. I am oil fields.

Remote Fiction of Being

On the coastline, north
and a headwind to the east,
there are places of hard rock
to the coastline stuck in interval.
Seven small points of resistance;
the diffractions find many grievances,
the sand clutches softly and the small rocks round.

The heat will wane in the afternoon, eventually.
And it will say:
 nunca-nunca

It is to the north that the rock fights with water,
and touching any land close to
sundering beneath,
I wish

I would never take aught for all
and fall behind the path again,

my ankles in the wet grain,
undelivered from shells mortared by shells.

The waves rapture at my knees
and in the distance my mother would say,
It is time to go. My mother would say,
It's time to go.

Soil Above Earth

I take hard the root matter in my hands, I dive into soil in the spring—it calls fortified from winter digestion beneath snow, among the mold piles of leaf dust and my sisters orange peels, rotten cucumber.

I dig, soil beneath my nails and find silent crocus bulbs and articulated irises to keep in the cellar till fall.

One never hollows with tools, metal scraping on rocks stuck into clay.
One day I dug elbow deep, and I found a hammer—rusted from original construction.
But only of our house, the sycamore has been there longer—
three arms lengths thick around and shedding.

My brother thought their seeds, prickly spheres, were Alien spores.
Dissect them and see or find one half emerged the pod split open,
roots growing out the bottom.

My sister rips them from the garden; sometimes they grow back left whole
in the compost heap. Soil above earth will do this.

Bizzare

My beard is long and I am proud. I will live the desert,
wrap the sun in melted gold.
I'll be more than mexico in the end.

Haiku with Greta

On the slow slope of the mountain
near a creek, near a town

Four people, not all strangers,
stand and discuss eclipse.

it becomes:

Sun Shadow:

The moon is full red
And yet the sun never gets
To block anything.

Strange

It's a beautiful day in your neighborhood, a beautiful day:
and in the sunshine, and in the sun time, I'll walk unassumingly along.

I take note: an empty drive, the way a tree is cut around power lines,
and the affects of green in young girls.

I take note: the local coffee shop has burnt roast.
I take note: no one notices here.

Maybe I will make this mine.
Slip past in five four time.
And consuming modes
or quartered tones
as buttered toast,

I'll sing, would you be mine, could you be mine.

Though I have run away in seven eight.

Coytesville

A nanny goat ascends
to see Harlem being built, to see the ferries,
and in the dirt of quarried cellars,
dreaming igneous, sleeping, softly igneous-igneous.
Hard off of we are those who spoke to sour pear trees,
Italian to murmur to a daughter as seven ghosts,
and the silent-film stars and the
honeysuckle all sleeping
igneous-igneous without
forming a choir.

Br'er Rabbit

My mother's roses grew wild and high below
the dining room window of our rented home.
Unlatticed rose, the pale eruptions
were not-white-not-pink—

Its thorns sought out a briar patch,
around corners sliced unwary arms.

Once my mother made perfume,
just rotten soft beneath apple smells
and our fruit was left a livery, like the
breast-sized radish two years forgotten
that we ate together at home without fathers,

A home we shared with black-bodied ants
who lived hard as the ivy in stucco
between the warped-wood and sepia news.

Beyond it I hid in our hill's weed wood
past tossed tires and rusted cans:
only me in the slope and indigenous.

Weird

(Old and Middle English)

We the bodiless sisters waited and watched.
We were indifferent, beyond the gods.
We were simple weavers loving threads.
We watched and weaved.
We knew the time that our well runs dry.
And as death and taxes, we were, in the end.
We were in the end what will have been.
You take this now as your worth.

(Modern English)

A triplet before trinity, singled, I was the dark and devious clouds,
the feature of sad-sung and graying hills.

I lived as moss and covered trees, humming night through the losing land,
the lust of the uneasy kind, and I walked away ungluing the cosmos.

(Post-English)

Hi, I am no stranger. I have a home here.

Do you know that I breathe, that cheap and out of doors, at night, I laugh thoughts.
Sometimes I sleep. I might walk the same way twice.

I said hell-o are we awake.

Yes, sorry, I forgot my manners. I do not mean to disturb. Yes, I do like living here.
Yes, it's awful wonderful here. Here in the milquetoast.

Fascinating, really, wow, congratulations,

Did I tell you, that once I looked for a symbol to counterweight custom
but found only quantitative evidence of faith.

The common denominators fell out of my pockets and I could never write the proof.
The grant writers did not like that much.

Good-bye, I will run away from four-foul winds, and be bated.
But there is no way left to be ironic so I will find grass for napping.

Coupled

I saw you after day had cleared in rain
and met you after midnight spun.

Your way of being shy was familiar,
And I traveled to music, alone.

I followed quickly down the muddy trail,
And made camp by the creek to closely fall

Asleep. But, two alone, awake, not knowing
who was stranger, we waited for dusk
and tried at the blues.

By day we walk the hot dirt road,

while cedars drink the creek away to green and larches deny a yellow turn,
refuse thought of long fall's wet weather winnowing away,

The evening sun shards through pines,
and we feel the change of heat

as the motion of air, effected as moth's
bodies, short living as tulips,

And we hold to sing, sounded by hemlocks stretching bark across their mass,
measured by hemlocks, in motionless voice we sing July,

And we of kind unquiet mix in the sweetness and the grit.

Delusion and Contentment

Sight of river, sight beyond: blank brought to white by weather,
black highway, houses as plain.

In a church, in a world: the stones a ground, roots a catacomb,
kneeling rock a pew for song.

From the river I walk back through gaps in chain, in fence.
I seek no rejoinder along the alongs.

Walk the baleful blight that day, the non-light, the noxious,
the false crowds of might be places.

Take tongues to talk of learning, legs looking movement.
Hard busied winter comes to abstract.

Busy this winter comes to take sense, to require of the snow
the malice of frost. So I walk away.

On high my thin man climbs the mountain, gone, to form alone,
the juggernaut of truly present,

He wrought of movement, he I know not but in sleeping games,
private matches and bitten lips.

His movement is work of heart, eye and bone: his beat
that of reptilian brain, muscles, veins and bile.

He did not linger in death of skin or in his life of spleen and insulin,
hard the body digests itself.

Here he had force of prostate but not of voice;
there was no song or art to pull him through.

Through snowy passes, in dark speeches, he and I drove his old friend
to the wet-peopled coast.

We left the stark cold with memories of touching ghosts,
left for further west's autumnal ocean.

We talked in rounds, came to light and suffering:
adversity, affliction, agony, anguish, difficulty,
discomfort, distress, dolor, misfortune, ordeal,
passion, torment, torture: these are never theirs:

Delusion and *contentment* was spoken by the traveling friend,
from the sleeping lion's bitter lips.

Below we left the traveler to a raving west shore,
to dream it heard, and hard off when rain stops.

We left the curve of earth, left the two brown lines of gold to blues.
I left ocean to sky and shore.

Far and Gone

Dream

“Simply close your eyes not for the sorry sleep but the pure focus of a moment.”

Wayward B. Wilson dreams—dreamers left behind can think they wake
just as the woken may think they are dreaming:
the blue sky should not sing like that.

Wayward has a mother. This is no extraordinary thing except to Wayward
who has never woken.

“Wayward Wilson come home,” his mother said.
“Not to the fold, but the fold of your bed sheet.
Wayward B. Wilson answer me!

Oh, my little B. Buzz, buzz, my little B. Buzz, buzz.

Figment

Gutter rouge take the cold against diffusement,
against the forty-nine ways I will leave again—

They all find start at the ball of the hapless
and I will dance by you, smiling, passing by in touch,
I will feel your face, with my borne arms and elbows, my welted hands.

Gutter rouge take this nonsense against cohesion,
against the forty-nine ways I will return—

to find you on the sun and shore accompanied by the disfigured in thought
soaked in their old and wanting whimpers,
sold into their dreams of beyond.

Imagination (In Parable)

Ashwell's mother might have whispered to him: roll violent between the banks
do not saunter slowly through silt, eyes too mounded with salt to see.

She knew not her child's face of perfect shapes: Ashwell of ellipses, diamonds
and triangles, never knew, he could not tell-sums-do-time.

She knew not of what he wanted: to know what would happen
if stones grew legs and what the world would look like
if sun were blue or green or greenish blue or bluish green
and why did no-one sing the yellows.

When she thought of her child she whispered:
I pray my lord his soul you keep.
Sometimes she did this without thinking.

The mother Ashwell knew would say:
child, you're so stupid, you're in my way,
go outside and be a rock for all I care.

It was mid-July and Ashwell pretended.

Kim Clayton came round the corner eating blueberries
child's blue dress unidentified as blue
her dark braids begged to come undone.

Kim settled down into the stone seat she had found.
Ashwell laughed at his clever pretending.

She gave no sign of shock, no cry or scream,
she smeared a rotten blueberry on his face.

He tried to whimper, to move his toe
Ashwell prayed to the world
to let him move his toe.

A waning moon came out and he was thankful
to find that rocks will sleep and that cool
evenings does little to harm stone.

Here I am! Ashwell tried to say and summer
passed he slept more and more each day
leaves reddened him in orange in yellow
brown blanketed him from the snow.

This is when the fantasy of his mother started.
Never a desperate girl, a reckless girl
or a cruel one.

A womanly-girl in a dark blue dress,
high collar trimmed in white
her skirt engulfed him
as he danced atop high-heels,
her hands holding him.

Years went by and only Kim did wake him.

She would sit on him and think
what it would be to run off anywhere.
Warm days in October and Kim thought
anywhere she might go.

She cut slices from hard green apples
curved the knife precisely
over her forearm raising little hairs.

Dead Mums

An old man November roared me down
beneath a streetlamp saying:
even in California I have a chill
that counteracts the silhouettes
of palm trees, sinks beneath
the desert plateau to a dusty
pink one in the morning.

November, in wanting of the pressure of irises
began to cry; for each curving open where
yellow streaks into centers, he cried.

Sobbing, he left beach song visions
when all would soak him down
and revel in November,

And walked away.

They found him in an alley,
blue-white, frozen, and spent;

They found him
cocooned between ages,
fed on tearings and pulp
slow and methodic.

They found him
crystallized and transformed,
half way to April only knowing
the smells of dead mums.

There was no one for
farewells or watching
of ashes scattered;

he was remembered only
as unseasonable.

Hallucination

Must I as wormwood seep from the page.

In consummation fire is dry wood or oxygen
at a million miles the flight; earth taken over air,
or was it air taken over the earth-longing body.

When you are gone I return to life.

But maybe you'll meet me in the roughness of the weeds,
Take my hand, guide sorry knees, next to the quiet,
after the long snow, a long lost spelling
or all of my forgotten prayers

for our bit of bitter root and our bit of sweet.

Prosipina: A Myth

In touch as sensation of sight, I saw a forward fight in flesh
and done unto have no apology: I sought three seeds, cardiac
of death's grown red, round ovum, my own juiced mouth pale
awaiting the invention of snow.

Mother, how I dreamt the first wayward fall upon the ocean,
on sunned rocks, on mud homes, on startled bears,
upon Clementines, Papayas and Peaches,
the first cold to touch the wild brier.

I rise to say thank you cardinal for in white, in red: blooming
the winter and his warmth, him suckering me to play at mercy
until beyond worth, I laugh that anything is

and is in must, mother
I must, just as I shall return.

Mystery Rites

In walking bodies fervors lead way.
I take the closed-eyes-path in pine-life, I take

The way through thickets and watch how
cone-seeds shed or stone and rock remove

blood before flesh, before
flesh cloth ripped,

though not all skin, nor all flesh,
nor all blood removed.

In winter's crop of intoxication
or in thanks for cold earth covering
or needle-wilds and water-fire
touched in brown death's divine:
dance and voice—dance long-body, twisting rib.

Wilds

Nights spent listening
to the wind sound of the Atlantic,
tossed below, come down to pound, the sirens call.

Leafless April has been violent this year.

Harbored in mountains structured by highways,
in an ancient angry hollow where only the tree sleep,
deer gone from wasting, two figures find shelter
where anyone could hide.

Come out of the city; descend upon the first layers of granite.
The Hudson and the constant rain conspire.

And when the water comes who will be left?
The oak groves in volcanic rock peer down on the bridge.

The water tells patience,
which with wind wanting to be ocean, may exhaust.

Far and Gone

First night: aurora borealis: against midnight it is white, at a glance a cloud,
but sight says it was the hand of one often called.

This is not what is told— the new moon: colors naked, in carousel, in lighted eyes,
night exhibiting like patriotism.

But it was the hand of god slowly taking hold of the night air and letting go,
passing through to say good-bye
in a language where it means hello.

Return,
to the wilds of people:
what wisdom would choose to remain,
to wander; smile at a costume like a river:
to make man feel lucky; bring life to blue heat and not sway.

Thought Maps

Abstract (with vegetable substance and lactose)

You must believe. I tell you, you must believe in words.
These are thoughts undrawn, not a white crystalline substance (also called milk sugar)
or the practical matters (unacademic, unspeculative, untheoretic).

The beetroot and spinach-leaf are words.
Do not picture the plant, grown, a green thing; do not picture the red-purple of roots.

I know embodiment as confection's chemical structures, I the drug, the condensate:
the world degenerate, disassociated and disengaged.

I am the cauliflower. I exist transcendent and withdrawn.
I will not give in to cultivation for edible parts.

My contemplations run down, run through, become wrapped up;
I am this informal recap; I shall withdraw, drawn away,
removed by beasts unburdened and obscure.

Nova

Take this—a bead in the palm: lapis lazuli, plastic pink, amethyst, amber, garnet, jade. Or more than substance, I seek a texture, size, shape: soft round and rolling in hands, quality of pearl. You catch it with your fingers; let it settle between the lines in your hand. It was barely time: before cannot be known. Before cannot be known as oysters or tree sap; cannot be known as the dead matter of life put through the pressure and duration of ground—to be of use, fill pits or piles, a long decay in marshland, meadow, in graves of cedar swamps, unknown waters after barges leave the Hudson. Wait, hold still—the pearl in the palm taken is size and shape of the first moment of everything, so the TV says, though there is no mention of the word or its speaker.

Thought Maps

Walking through a piece of park
on uneven ground and grass
the sycamore roots sprawl
and pushed up to shed bark:

this is Brooklyn,
and because we are the same
he turns to saying:
you are the perfect height.

He kisses me to take motion
by the wrought iron fence,
to say in lilted baritone:
you are a happy torture,

so I may reply, that makes
a good definition,

or on the first night,
he pacing thought maps
through his feet at the foot of the floored bed
saying I cannot believe anymore.

Below the reds

A change of form had brought me there, as if suddenly the world had slipped
and burnt beauty took its place, beauty burnt not to the touch,

but brown of black oak-soil. I once called you Brooklyn rose,
deep brown-red rose but all I saw was the petals reflexive—

yet who knows in the sight of bee's the patterns beyond
the blues—unfathomable scene to mind's recoil.

In memory: in July's night shade or morning shadow, beyond all the sleepers,
before dark grasses hedged by maples and tables and junipers,

within lapidary's lengths, I laid my fingers in yours. Silent I led back by step
and swing of hip and changed to bareness of summer dress.

there was no moment, no breath, just laughing we rolled, taken in,
lips on lips, another's voice heard inside cheekbones, tickling.

and I woke to you in rain, which we befall.
Another night—bodies to be just bodies

and away from bare thighs a mouth left with the taste—leaving Atlantic.
You know often I will even with heat, even as you say:

*I just remember you in the morning light on her lawn, and laugh, a little,
or drunk I sing to you of the honey tree.*

Melting my Father's Work

In soft it mounted a child's wall, blue-brown ground, tired pink sky, line instructing line.

The skin: flesh of earth.

The skull: the riverbed having time in dust.

The lower curve of spine: the west winds expose of rock.

And all examined too close: purple night's aura of approach.

The bodies piled in disaster's field:

One does not know where the bodies break from earth.

I slept alone in my world of wood and plastic

fighting dull the light of sleep with words ignorant of audience.

Upon my book I fell to rest, long hair tied tight,

and woke in heat to my bed burning in the candlelight.

Plastic glass drips and fire rends the metal—

the thermostat's spiraled innards stick in drippings.

Not hewn, the porous paper made for ink and waters,

eats in the smoke turning sunset into dusk.

As it cools the plastic drips and forms grayed icicles,

catching light, twisted crystal and the spiral protrudes from mid sky.

In-Side-Sane

Mad

These are the sides: to cut off the tip of the tongue;
or be caught rambling or ambling obsessions.

I have conversations with no face
and say my prayers in abstract.

When the time comes I will wear the leather from a Cadillac,
strip it down from the back seat and with a thick needle,
old string untwined, sew the sides to myself.
Will the tanned skin grow once connected?

There is the smell of wild garlic grass caught on clothes,
burning furniture smokes—leather, oak and polyurethane—
or bits of rubber, or seat stuffing.

There is shelter to be found,
here are others pummeling on wood panels.

Someone asks me of my dreams: for years I only remember running.

Then there is too much on the self, I split and look down on the active
—I am the slobbering wino, fumbling.

Reflections on San Francisco from a Bed in Brooklyn

I would lick glass from your streets like a mantra, like a mantra say—
lick glass from your streets in mantra, in mantra mean lick your streets
—in mantra—some mantra taken from glass, from streets—

I would have you in a mantra and in a mantra mean:
I should have taken the tooth or nothing at all.

But what exposure—to rip tusk from skull, from rotting gum and nerve?
Skin flap and rib expose a turgid liver or was it a kidney,
layers of fat lost to microbial decay in long yellow seaweed, in purple kelp.
The body and bones blue-black sea-crows won't touch,
but I took a piece of ankle fleshless in the sand.

It was known by the foot or flipper spread, small for its species,
skeletal structure held by the bare remain of joint.
I took it and it was heavy and hot inside the cloth.

So what of this? I moved to sea-foam in October.
I was told the Pacific was cold. Not lies but not cold,
not lies but ocean.

My guides away by the rock held hands against wind, against hallow form.

But not knowing until we were drunk, until quarter toned reggae
made soundtrack for her taking hand to emptied uterus,
taking belly to hold.

I left them to her bleeding and moved toward the foreign lick of salt.

To the Piers of the Westside

Pier, by which I have walked out to the mingled Hudson,
all your planks and posts say, *softy dissolved I become:*
swallow me salt river, my dirty salt river consume.

And consummation leaves you skeletal, to be had
by estuarie's barnacles, the tide of unharvested crustaceans and returned sea lions.

Flattered by west-north winds,
by lake-wet and sea-owned and smoked air, you seep through river clay.
You wish for metamorphic.

Make the currents above and below
scream, give voice, low-moan of metamorphic.
Yes. That metamorphic,

lights on the surface, lighted night-sky,
the whole sensation of city saying for you:
and therefore rejoice.

That lovely bastard word.

Begin in being taken wet.
Forget valleys or little hills, bogs or barrens,
forget, or maybe already forgotten, forbidden,
the name of your woods, your original scents,
the times of days the sun hit your tops.
The soil delicious or horrible.

You wink at old men across the river,
on different shore.

Can you hear the sound *Pescados* float across?
The water falling the cliffs?

A wild turkey on a cobbled road or young hart
through stone remains of wells and homes.

Can you listen below the bridge and above the tunnels?
Can you play? Play metaphoric with no belief in rhetoric.

Play with balance for I dreamt that I felt.
I was in the river, our dirty salt river,

though in thought I know no violet slicks of oil.
You had no choice. You and I are claimed
by waters like the body like the water.

The Dictionary Unreal

That some have yet begun to sleep, that some have just begun to wake, and some in knowing weirdness dress dreams of days, of nights not worn. Are we, are you a monster of sun, have I taken the message of laughing mother, evil her teeth gleamed, that I have not yet woken, that I take the fodder for the fire.

Does she ask what dreams do you wish to wake to, what rage, what rave, what rant, what widdendream, what wood? What lost meaning of madness, what craze, what craving do you wish for? Creams and boysen-buoyant love. Wild, I had to taste purple. Vines growing over the improper junipers, not for mouths, but for its own progenerative and knowing not how it came to be begotten.

Say aloud, what year is this, what year of life draws stream to torrid, rocks over water, water over rocks, and you over rocks over water over rocks, the whitewash, the glare of light. It should.

What glare of lights, how I hover above the whitewater sipping tea. I should.
Do you speak of future, a little girl in white frocks, little death.
She is of timeless but may hold only one image.

I stand above the creek or crick, and know all the water I have ever seen and I am taken by the idea of being done with death. Not yet. In life that has been once lived, never knowing in peace nor sleep, never knowing in the moment as tumult before your eyes, as the moment your whole life and in that moment your whole life.

I that may make the water flash and change, though it should. It should be dark, dark and of less knowing. It should. But I know the grays and growsns at the bank.

To sit, or stretch in mud and root, little rocks in my finger, soil working its way under my nails, into the pours of what skin maybe exposed. What skin would you expose?
This is where it becomes your own.

Wood

(Old and Middle English)

I fell coming from fields and thrush. My mind was blind in time's hole. Pierced through by my spear, I was pinned to her and the Tree held me long. I never could have made a home. There are times I tried, but time it never flowed.

I learned the songs released above the worlds. Half blind I gave one eye for the sun. Most often I awoke in dirt. By my hands the Earth was made from flesh, the Sea of blood, the Clouds of brain, the Stones of teeth. I moved from here to there without a thought. I, the father of the twinned, made words and wars.

I knew not what I said. Wondering below I gave song. I stole the long fermented muse, not content with the drops from her mouth.

In obscurity: In the end I shall be the wolf as I was the honey wine.

I was of the dog, see my teeth, long and gone into flesh, existing in reason's lack of courage.

I was carnal divine, fighting the figure saying I had had enough.
Now I am in footnotes, last being used in green mountain dialects before radio's radius.

*From Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Trees (Eastern Region),
"Chestnuts"*

To be Formerly a Large Tree of New York City in 1904

I with a massive trunk,
broad, rounded,
with a dense crown once stood.

Now, with small sprouts
from the base of long
dead trees, cannot make
home.

I cannot be fences, medicine,
telephone poles, or ships.

I might have fed a few,
those short-stalked, stout,
broadly becoming,

those dark or whitish
broadly becoming

my seed, becoming broadly,
long-pointed, narrowly oblong,
slender, hairless, lost—

Though I being at the
source of the main domestic
cultivated and commercial areas
continue from roots until killed
back by ornament and fungus.

City Scrapes

I look out over the structured shore absent of taxis and barges coming in.
In the city of inevitable rest, the river quells and sounds as wasps,
Stands of darkened glass steal full morning from the sky,
as buildings, blocking east, may wreck and reek of corrosion's smell.

*

In violence, in velocities, take the night by the little hairs
by the spectrum pierced—electronic emissions
atomic mercury blue and green,
sodium d-line yellow-red—and raw in the pavement's field.

*

We are under-high, and I broke the couch in parking you
we crumble in lot, take love in refuse, make home
in all that rots on, and on to pristine,
as urine exposed to oxygen becomes ammonia.

*

I am the goosegrass, the webbing green growing through—
insistent as dirt, the rust to pavement.
you live in the wonderbust of bleeding lobes, creations of repair,
creations of the severed synapse and dripping.

We bite into the opposite of dusk,
the orange-gray sky for feeling,
juice the air and take in soiled lungs,
the momentum of dissolving air.

*

Before all is did and done my eyes are blind
the river brightens from green steel's slanting
reflection of sun, and all you see is river,
bright river now, bright clean.

*

City of forgotten future wake, willingly
find full form in unmotive grace
in emptied streets, in metal canyons dark
and left alone, the mooned sky.